

As a national children's advocacy organization dedicated to improving the well-being of our nation's children, First Focus on Children appreciates the steps taken by the U.S. Census Bureau leading up to the 2020 census to protect the privacy of families with children so that no sensitive information such as a family's immigration status, housing situation or other sensitive information will be shared with other agencies and stakeholders.

We ask that the U.S. Census Bureau balance the need to protect families' privacy with ensuring that federal, state and local officials have sufficient data to make critical decisions about allocation of funding for resources such as education and healthcare that support children's healthy development.

Many decisions about allocation of funding for children are made at the local level, such as public education funding, and so we urge that data is made available by both state and local legislative district and contains enough detail to provide a holistic picture of child well-being on the local level. Child poverty levels and other indicators of child well-being differ greatly by zip code and neighborhood across cities, towns, and large urban areas, and so the decennial census is critical in providing comparable state and local data that is precise enough to help local decision-makers understand how to best target resources critical to help all children thrive.

This includes data on the relationship of the child to the householder so that policy makers and advocates can understand the nature of the complex families in their communities and meet their needs--for example, communities with many grandparent householders need to provide resources for grandparents caring for grandchildren, or communities with many single parents need to provide resources for those parents.

We also need data that is broken out by race and ethnicity at local levels--smaller than place--so that policy makers and child advocates in communities can understand where racial and ethnic populations are within cities and towns and make sure that all communities have equitable access to voting stations and public services.

Our country's economic future is dependent on the well-being of our nation's children. We urge the U.S. Census Bureau to provide the specific data from the 2020 Census necessary to inform responsible decision-making about child well-being while also protecting the privacy of households with children.